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THE CAPTIVE CHIEF

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD



AND OTHER POEMS



2

THE CAPTIVE CHIEF,

A Tale of Flodden Field.

AND OTHER POEMS.

**PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY
EDINBURGH AND LONDON**

THE CAPTIVE CHIEF,

A Tale of Flodden Field.

AND OTHER POEMS.

BY

JAMES THOMSON.

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR BY
BALLANTYNE & CO., EDINBURGH.

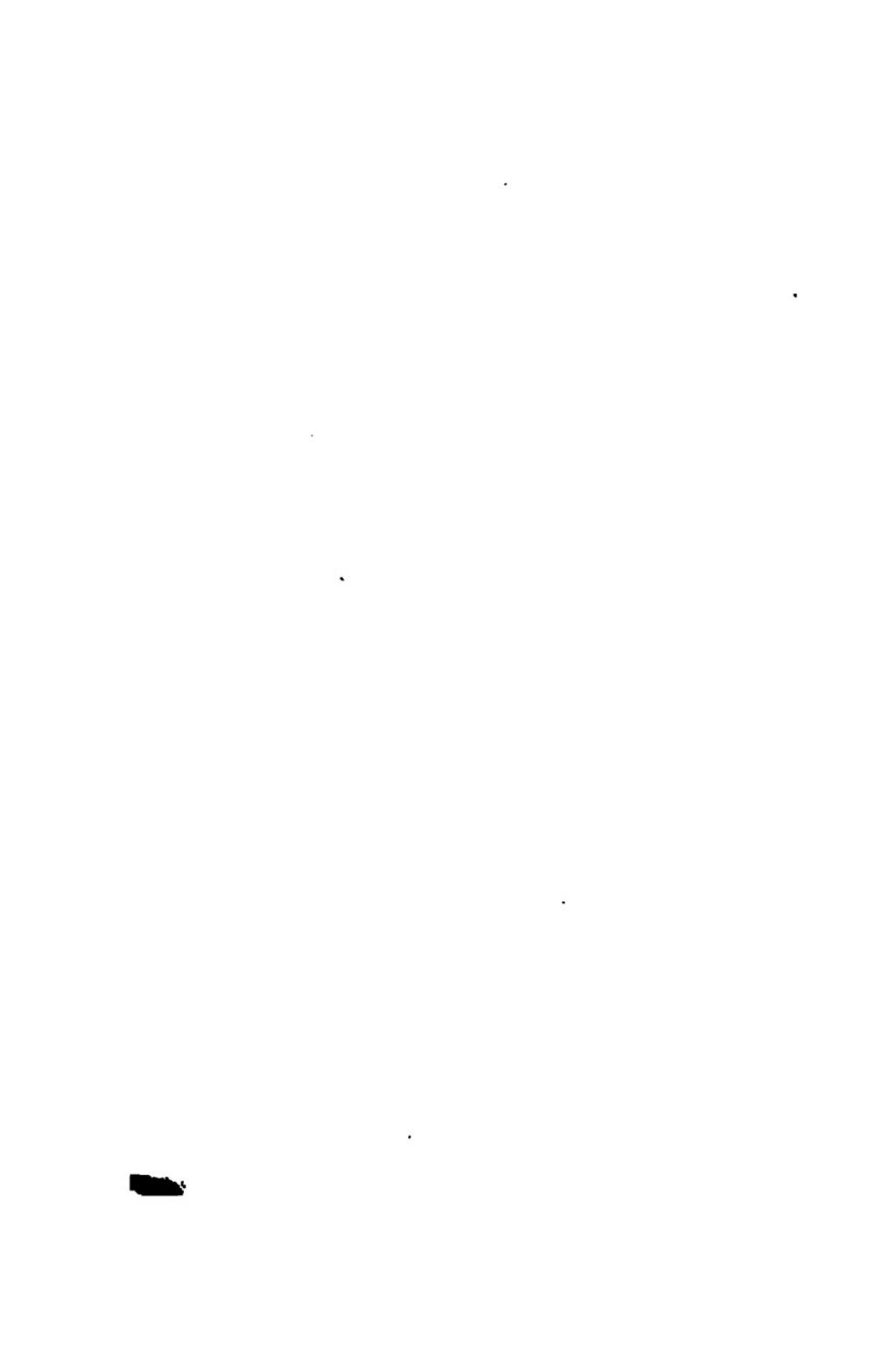
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1871.



DEDICATED,
BY PERMISSION,
TO
LADY FAIRFAX.

HAVING SERVED YOUR LADYSHIP'S FATHER AND GRANDFATHER,
IN THE CAPACITY OF A SERVANT,
THE AUTHOR FEELS THAT HE IS PLACING
This Little Volume
UNDER THE PROTECTION OF ONE WHO TAKES AN
INTEREST IN ITS SUCCESS.



PREFACE.

“POEMS by a working man,” have ceased to be a novelty. A professor of the divine art of poesy, at a public meeting some years ago, gave the world a rough estimate of the number of imitators of the heaven-born art in Great Britain. The number was so astounding that I felt a sort of guilty criminality for ever having scribbled verses. Under this feeling I am constrained to make all due apology to those that have the spirit, and “are sent to prophesy.” To the public I offer no apology ; for do not they in great numbers buy plated goods, and vile prints that would shock the taste of “*cultivated minds?*” To the small portion of the public which includes my personal friends and acquaintances, I give my best thanks for their confidence and generosity in liberally subscribing towards my little book before they saw its size or contents.. If they find any

pleasure in its perusal, I shall feel a satisfaction that is perhaps only felt by those that make a book.

“Some rhyme a neighbour’s name to lash,
Some rhyme vain thoughts for needful cash,
Some rhyme to raise the country clash.”

The last-named motive is perhaps the most potent with rhymers like myself—and why not? The most illiterate may have a yearning after that immortality that is only granted to “the gods;” for have we not eyes? have we not ears? and have we not a heart that can feel and love, although it cannot express its emotions in language measured by the rules of art? Are such to hold their tongues, “even from good words?”

An old book-maker has said, “What your hand findeth to do, do it with diligence.” Acting upon this precept, I launch my little volume upon the ocean, to sink or swim.

JAMES THOMSON.

SHAWDON, July 28, 1871.

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~~Poems of~~

THE CAPTIVE CHIEF,
AND OTHER POEMS.





THE CAPTIVE CHIEF :

A TALE OF FLODDEN FIELD.

BEHIND the Cheviots sank the sun
Ere Flodden's fatal fight was done,
And night's dark curtain gently fell *
On such a scene as none can tell.
Scotland's brave host that morn arose
Burning to meet their Southern foes ;—
Ere eve, beside meand'ring Till,
That warlike host in death lay still :
Like autumn leaves cast to the ground,
There lay the dead and dying round,
Thick as the grain from sower's hand
Lies scattered o'er the furrowed land :

* This memorable battle, so disastrous to Scotland, was fought on the 7th of September 1513. It began about four o'clock in the afternoon, and continued until darkness covered the scene. The gallant King of Scotland, James IV., was slain, with two bishops, four abbots, twelve earls, seventeen lords, four hundred knights; and from ten to twelve thousand of the Scottish host were left lifeless upon "Flodden's fatal field."

So lay proud Scotland's warriors brave,
None left to dig a brother's grave.
Oh, fatal field!—oh, mournful day!
When prince and peasant lifeless lay.
Fenced round with bodies of the dead,
Their king lies there, with crownless head.
Brave as the lion on his shield,
He thought to turn the wavering field;
But, ah, alas! 'twas all in vain,
He dealt his blows with strength amain;
First in the fight he scorned to fly—
“Death, or victory” was his cry.

The dawning morn revealed to view
His mangled body wet with dew;*
Stripped by the spoiler's ruthless hand,
There lay the King of fair Scotland,

* The dead body of the king was discovered amidst a heap of slain, despoiled and stripped of his armour, and covered with ghastly wounds. For twenty-five years he had worn an iron chain round his loins in penance for having appeared at the head of the rebels who killed his father, James III., against his express orders. To this chain he added a link every year in testimony of his deep sorrow. All history speaks of King James IV. as brave and generous to an extreme, majestic in countenance, with the wonderful art of winning all hearts to his person and cause. He was killed in the twenty-fifth year of his reign, and the thirty-ninth of his age.

Nought left to tell his princely state,
To mark him out as high and great,—
Nought, save the chain he meekly wore
Around his loins in penance sore.

The Tindale thieves, like birds of prey,*
Hung round the field and watched the fray.
Wild Branxton, with the bloody hand,
Led on that fierce and lawless band:
Each with a pine torch flaming bright
Rushed forth like demons of the night
To crown the horrors of that day,
And spoil the fallen where they lay.
They stripped the dead and wounded bare
Of all they wore was rich or rare.

One noble youth, whose fine array
Bespoke the warrior rich and gay,
Lay with his wounded bosom bare,
That showed a jewelled cross hung there.

* When darkness had spread its pall over this field of the dead, the thieves of Tindale and Teviotdale fell upon the dead and dying like birds of prey, and stripped them of their armour and everything valuable about their persons. The king and his nobles were amongst the first to undergo this degradation, the thieves selecting those first who wore the richest housings. It would be impossible to portray by pen or pencil the scene that presented itself to the eyes of those who saw the "fatal field" on the morning after this memorable and bloody battle.

Calm as a sleeping child he lay,
But then anon was heard to pray :
“ God save our country ; shield our king,
Spread o'er his head Thy sheltering wing.
For him we 'll spend our blood and breath,
On—on to victory or to death ! ”
His broken spear he reared on high,
And shouted loud his gathering cry ;
Quick o'er his frame a shudder passed,
The broken spear fell from his grasp.

Branxton the scene in silence eyed.
“ Faddon, help here ! ” he sharply cried.
A mounted horn that loosely hung
Quick from his belt the chief unslung,
Then loosed the dying warrior's casque,
And pressed to 's lips the gen'rous flask.
He felt the wine his strength renew,
A laboured breath at length he drew,
And gazed on chief in mute surprise,
As one that doth from trance arise.
Then quick and soft the warrior spoke,
His voice in Celtic accents broke :
“ Tell me if ye be friend or foe ?
Have we the vict'ry ?—ay or no ?
No !—Is our king safe, or is he slain ?
Slain !—Then, O God ! all hope is vain.

Oh ! welcome death ! I long to die,
And be with those that round me lie.
My country ! oh, I weep for thee !
My mountain home no more I 'll see !
But home 's not home if slaves we be ;
Then welcome death and grave to me."
A sigh of sorrow heaved his breast,
And to his heart the cross he prest.

Upon crossed spears they placed a shield,
And bore the chieftain from the field
To where the stolen horses stood,
And placed him on a litter rude ;
A martial cloak they round him threw,
To shield him from the midnight dew.
Laden with spoil, the Bloody Hand
Drew from the field his savage band ;
By Langleyford they took their way,
Long ere the Cheviots smiled in day.
They halted at the noontide hour
Where Linhope's waters downward pour.
Loud was the noise, and wild the din,
That echoed in the rocky linn :
Drunk with the spoil of others' woe,
The ribald song and wine did flow ;
The beacon blazed on Simond's height
Long ere they halted for the night.

At last they reached lone Coquet-side ;
There for the night they meant to bide.
Their watch-fire cast its lurid gleam
On tangled brake and winding stream ;
The night-birds rose in wild dismay,
And, screaming, took their flight away.

Worn with the toils of night and day,
Soon on the earth each dalesman lay ;
Some 'mong the brakens made their bed,
Some sought the pine-tree's darker shade.
Their captive lay as in a dream
Still-listening to the warbling stream.
At last he slept in calm repose,
Oblivious of his wounds and woes,
Till startled by a bugle sound
That echoed from the rocks around.
At that sharp sound each dalesman rose,
All prompt to meet their chasing foes.
The blast was but the warder's call
That paced Harbottle's dark-grey wall.*

* Harbottle Castle, now in ruins, stands on a commanding eminence above the River Coquet. We read that it was given by William the Conqueror, in the tenth year of his reign, to Robert de Umfranville, Knight, Lord of Tours and Vian, to keep and to hold, by defending that part of the country for ever from enemies and wolves, with the sword which the said King Wil-

But quick they mustered man and beast,
And left the place in speedy haste ;
The captive chief they left behind,
Like some lost garment out of mind.
Unconscious of their flight he lay
Till dawn had brightened into day ;
Then round the scene a look he cast,
And wished that it might be his last.
He thought of his dear Highland home,
Where, as a boy, he used to roam,
Dreaming of war and high renown ;—
But all those airy dreams have flown.

The Rose of Coquet chanced to stray
Past where the wounded chieftain lay ;

liam had by his side when he entered Northumberland. In the reign of King Henry II. this castle was taken by the Scots, but was soon recovered again. It was used as a stronghold or prison for all depredators taken within the Middle Marches.

It was also in this castle that the widowed Queen of James IV. (killed at Flodden), about a year after this event, married Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, by whom she had a beautiful daughter, Margaret, born in 1516 at Harbottle Castle, afterwards married to Matthew Stuart, Earl of Lennox, mother to Henry Lord Darnley, husband of Mary Queen of Scots, and father of James VI., first King of England and Scotland.

The scenery in the neighbourhood of Harbottle and Holystone is lovely and romantic, and has many features in common with the Highland scenery of Scotland.

Warder, her fleet and noble hound,
Sprang on the chief with savage bound.
“Down, Warder, down!” the maiden cried,
And quick her order was obeyed.
“Whom have we here?” she softly said,
While rising blush her face o’erspread.
The chieftain met her wondering gaze
Dumb with surprise and strange amaze;
He thought some angel from the skies
Looked down on him with pitying eyes.
A golden fillet bound her hair,
That reached her waist in tresses fair;
Her eyes appeared of liquid blue,
And sparkled like the morning dew;
Her ungloved hand, so small and fair,
Held in its grasp a volume rare;
She stood in all her queenly grace,
Fair as the Naiad of the place.
The chieftain told his mournful tale,
And saw a tear unconscious steal
From her sweet eyes; it seemed to flow
In pity at his tale of woe.

“You are my captive *now*,” she said,
“And in my dungeon must be laid.”
Straight back to castle then she went,

And six strong yeomen quickly sent
To bring the chief, with speed and care,
To the west tower, and place him there,
Upon Earl Gilbert's damask bed,
Where that great warrior's spirit fled.
From autumn till sweet flowery May
The chief in that lone chamber lay.
Many a dull and dreary hour
He spent in that great western tower,
Nought save the convent's tolling bell
To break the silence of the dell.
But oft at eve a sound more sweet
His longing heart and ears would greet,
A sound that made his heart to glow
With a sweet joy that few can know.
A maiden struck the trembling string
Of her sweet harp, and then would sing
A song of sorrow and of woe,
That made the tears unconscious flow—
A song of love and lover lost,
Ta'en captive by the Sar'cen host ;
Then she would strike a martial strain,
Such as we ne'er shall hear again,
Of battle's din and wild turmoil,
That made the blood to dance and boil.
The wounded chief longed for the hour
And strength to leave his prison-tower.

Restored at last, he sought the hall,
And for his captor fair did call.
She came with all her wonted grace,
A smile lit up her beaming face ;
But when she caught the chieftain's eyes
A mantling blush began to rise.
The chief bowed low, then, faltering, said
“ I come to thank you, gen'rous maid ;
Your slave and servant I must be,
My life, my all, I owe to thee.”
“ My captive, then, I set you free
From all allegiance due to me ;
You're free from this, at any hour,
To leave Harbottle's ancient tower.
Go to your home and clansmen brave,
Where the brown heath and tartans wave,
And seek no more our Border strife,
Where men so cheaply sell their life.”

But ere he left the Coquet-side,
Its fairest flower bloomed as his bride ;
He wed fair Ros'mond with that ring,
The gift of his belovèd king ;
And long she lived to bless the day
That she by Coquet-side did stray,
And found a wounded chieftain there,—
Her husband long,—the great St Clair.

MY LITTLE PRIMROSE FLOWER.

THERE grows a golden primrose
In a lone mossy dell,
The place where grows my primrose
I'll not to any tell ;
Beneath the shelter of an oak,
That's wrinkled grey with age,
My pet flower blossoms sweetly there,
Safe from the tempest's rage.

A little rill that trickles by
Makes music to my flower,
And wafts itself in dewy spray
To cool its mossy bower.
The speckled trout leap up with joy
When bright it shines and clear,
And April brings its gentle rain
My little flower to cheer.

Spring wakens Nature from her sleep,
There little birds do sing,
To see the trees put forth their buds,
And flowers begin to spring.

The robin makes his cosy nest
Beside my little flower,
And close beneath its shelt'ring leaves
His little brood does cower.

When in the west the evening star
Shines like a diamond bright,
The feathered choir in brake and briar
Sing sweet their last good night ;
And ere the morning star has sunk
Behind the Cheviots grey,
They sing to my flower in its mossy bower
Their hymn to the coming day.

At morning dawn a sunbeam steals
Where my pet flower is laid,
And wakes it with a warm soft kiss
Upon its golden head.
My virgin flower, like maiden pure,
Lifts its head to the azure sky,
And wafts perfume from its golden bloom
On the breeze that passes by.

Then come the bees through budding trees,
With a hum of joy they sing
To the flower of my little primrose,
The queen of early spring ;

From its cup of gold they sip
The honey sweet and clear,
And carry home with joyous song
The first-fruits of the year.

As 'neath this old oak-tree I sit,
I think of boyhood's day,
When, spotless as the primrose flower,
On the sunny bank I lay :
I gazed from earth to vaulted sky,
Till I seemed borne away
To a land of bliss, unlike to this,
Where flowers know no decay.

LINES WRITTEN ON A VISIT TO SPEYSIDE.

WHEN tired with worldly cares and toil,
How pleasant 'tis to stray,
And taste the sweets that Nature spreads
Along the banks of Spey !
No music to my ear so dear
As thine, soft murmur'ring stream !
The memory of it haunts my heart
Like some forgotten dream.

Though life's young day has passed away,
With all its fancied train
Of boyish hopes and airy dreams,
Yet thou art still the same.
Oft on thy sandy banks I built
The mimic castle high,
And tried, like ancient Bab'l'on's sons,
To reach the vaulted sky.

But sandy castles are like those
We build high in the air—
They vanish like the morning mist,
And leave our landscape bare.

Ah ! where are now the hearts and hands
That joined my boyish play ?
Some on life's stream have gone to wreck,
And some have passed away.

A few, like men, fight bravely in
Life's battle, sorely prest ;
But onward, upward, still they cry,
“ We 'll conquer ere we rest.”
Oft to the earth they are borne down,
And forced to quit the field ;
But still aloft Hope's banner waves
With “ Die, but never yield ! ”

Ye greyhaired fathers of my youth,
I 'll meet you here no more ;—
Just like a stream, in years gone by
You 've reached the boundless shore.
Yonder, around the grey kirk walls,
Your final rest you take ;
To earthly change and busy life
No coming morn will wake.

The Sunday bell that tolls at morn
Will greet your ears no more ;
Alas ! no more your friends you 'll meet
Around the old kirk door ;

18 LINES WRITTEN ON A VISIT TO SPEYSIDE.

In friendly talk no more you 'll join,
Nor ever want to know
If beasts be selling cheap or dear,
Or grain priced high or low.

Sons of the soil ! your life was toil,
But softly now ye rest,
And sleep as soundly and as calm
As those in purple dressed.
Upon yon crumbling moss-grown stones
I read your name and age,
With many a solemn warning text
Culled from the sacred page.

Your simple lives need no historic pen,
No brazen trumpet to rehearse your fame ;
Your humble virtues long will live behind,
Though flatt'ring record never breathe your
name.
Yours were the virtues that made Scotland great—
A frugal people and united state ;
When tyrants rose to hurl you from your seat,
Them back ye thrust in sure and dire defeat.

BLIND HECTOR AND HIS DOG.

LED by his faithful dog from door to door,
Blind Hector wandered many a parish o'er:
No beggar he; although by bounty fed,
He never had to ask for clothes or bread—
All had a welcome for the blind old man.
With shouts of glee the children ran,
And strove who first should lead away,
As guest, the hero of the day.
His faithful Tyke, that seemed possessed
Of more than kindness in his breast,
His blind old master's friend and guide,
That never changed nor left his side—
Unlike those friends that soon grow cold,
If we are wretched, poor, and old—
The faithful dog no meanness knew,
And had no sordid aims in view.
Along the rough uneven street
He careful led the blind man's feet,
Knew every house along the way,
Knew where to call and where to stay;
And well he knew their night's retreat,
With "Hector's Corner" and his seat,

Where oft he'd sat, a welcome guest,
To Sunday fare and Christmas feast.
And when the earth lay wrapped in snow,
He sat beside the peat-fire's glow,
And to the listening ploughmen told
Tales of his clansmen brave and bold,—
Of dark Culloden's murd'rous fray,
Where chief and clansmen vanquished lay,
And he himself fell in the van,
Amongst the bravest of his clan,
And crawled from thence at dead of night,
A wounded man with loss of sight,
And from that day he forth did roam
An exile from his mountain home.
For forty years a wand'rer's life he led,
And nightly filled a beggar's bed ;
On rough-made bed of straw or hay
For forty years the blind man lay ;
And ere his homely couch he prest,
A solemn prayer rose from his breast,
With thanks for mercies kindly given
By his Almighty Friend in heaven ;
Then calm he laid him down to rest,
With not a murmur in his breast.

But mishap on the best will fall,
And come alike on great and small.

One luckless morn they chanced to meet
A cur upon the village street,
Who sprang on Tyke in sudden ire.
Quick as a spark shoots from the fire,
The blind man raised his trusty stick,
Therewith the savage beast to strike,
But struck poor Tyke the deadly blow
Was meant to lay his rival low.
The poor old dog gave one low groan
That told his parting breath had gone;
A wail rose from the old man's breast,
As in his arms he fondly prest
The lifeless dog, his friend and guide,
Whom nought could tempt to leave his side.
Quick to the scene the neighbours ran,
And kindly soothed the poor old man ;
A farmer took poor Hector home,
And from his roof he ne'er did roam.
While age and sorrow soon him laid
Where none need human help or aid.
Beneath yon ash, with berries red,
We laid blind Hector's old grey head ;
And just beyond the crumbling wall,
Where soft the leaves in Autumn fall,
The children made poor Tyke a grave,
And over both the branches wave.

LINES INSCRIBED TO WILLIAM GREEN, ESQ.,
RUTHRIE.

ACCEPT, dear sir, this homely rhyme,
Though rude in measure and in chime ;
My grateful heart would speak your praise
For kindness done in bygone days.
You kindly helped me when a boy,
And filled my heart with secret joy :
I longed to leave our hills behind,
And mingle freely with my kind :
Hope pointed with her magic wand
To the longed-for and blessed land—
A land all seek, but none have found—
The place where nought but joys abound.
But I have found, what some may miss,
A friend to share life's ills and bliss.
Nigh thirty years have passed away
Since I beneath your roof-tree lay,
And many a change has passed since then
O'er barren moor and lonely glen.
Where grew the broom and stunted thorn,
There now waves rich the yellow corn ;

Where nought but barren heath was seen,
The eye rests now on richest green.
Such is the change I now can trace
Around your erewhile well-known place :
By energy and skilful toil,
You 've made the wilderness to smile.
But sad 's the change that I can see
On many a face long known to me :
Ay ! many a face once smooth and fair
Is wrinkled now and marked with care ;
And many a friend I loved to meet
I miss from off the village street.

But why should I pursue this theme ?
The past is gone like fairy dream :
It 's for the present we must live,
And to its wants our thoughts must give ;
And if the sceptic's tale be true,
Men need no higher aim pursue.
We live (say they) to eat and drink,
And then in dark oblivion sink.
This is the doctrine that they preach,
Though scarce believe they what they teach.
Man longs for some more healing balm,
To soothe life's ills, and shed a calm
On his strange, fitful troubled life,
So full of cares and aimless strife.

In vain he asks his fellow-man
To unriddle life's mysterious plan ;
He tries, but only tries in vain,
Our life's deep purpose to explain.
We see around us sin and care,
Pale misery and dark despair,
And wanton luxury and pride
Flaunt gaily past the beggar's side ;
Men spending life in vain debate
For party names, at best a *cheat*,
That stir men's passions into strife,
That blights and poisons all their life.
We see the bloody demon War
Ride on triumphant in his car,
And lay whole nations in the dust
To satiate men's pride and lust ;
And *liberty* seems but a dream—
Men only know it yet by name ;
And in its name such deeds are done,
As make us blush before the sun !
Men call it liberty to break the laws
Of Heaven and earth to aid their cause,
To trample every sacred trust
That men hold holy in the dust.
And shall we look and long in vain
For that blest time when love shall reign ?

No happier world will greet our view
While men their selfish aims pursue.

But from these thoughts I gladly turn
To your bright home beside the burn,
Where life so peaceful glides away,
Calm as the eve of summer's day.
Around you Nature, charming wild,
Seems ever changing like a child ;
Each passing day spreads to your view
Old scenes that every hour seem new.
At once we turn our wandering eyes
To Benrinne's top, that meets the skies,
And mark his ever-changing form
Amidst the sunshine and the storm.
The lesser hills that meet our view
Seem ever changing in their hue.
Along the winding vale of Spey
A thousand beauties lure the eye ;
The waving pine-woods, dark and green,
Lend varied glory to the scene ;
And over all there seems to rest
A calm that soothes the troubled breast,
That bids our anxious cares to cease
Where all around breathes calm and peace.
Even now my thoughts will often turn

To rocky linn and winding burn,
Where I have wandered free from care,
And happy as the birds of air.
My soul, at one with all around,
Drank in each pleasant sight and sound ;
The breeze that broke the evening calm
Made music like some heavenly psalm,
That wafts the spirit up on high,
Far from the scenes that round us lie,—
When to the soul a glimpse is given
And foretaste of the bliss of heaven.
Sweet Nature ! source of purest joy !
Thou sooth'st my heart when cares annoy :
Oft have I felt thy magic power
In life's dark melancholy hour.
Grant me, O Heaven ! some lonely glen,
Far from the toil and strife of men ;
There let me live and let me die
Beneath God's clear and azure sky ;
And when this doubting spirit 's fled,
Let me be with the lowly laid,
That 'neath the green sod nameless lie,
But whose fair record is on high.
And while I live I 'll grateful be
For all your kindness shown to me ;
And may the dove-like angel Peace

Your home make sacred and your place,
Where you have reared, with taste and skill,
A charming villa on the hill,
Where you and your belovèd wife
May peaceful spend the eve of life ;
And when you 've finished life's brief day,
God grant you higher joys, I pray.

AUTUMN.

WHO loves not Autumn's short'ning day
Through fruitful fields and lanes to stray,
And list the plaintive redbreast sing,
Where we have spent life's early spring?
With joy we turn our wondering eye
On the fair scenes that round us lie,
On golden fields of ripened grain,
Matured by Summer's sun and rain.

Sweet scents come wafted on the breeze,
From clover-fields and forest-trees ;
Nature her incense casts abroad
O'er hill and plain and dusty road ;
And smiling Autumn scatters wide
A bounteous store on every side,
And crowns man's labour and his toil
With generous plenty from the soil.

All nature seems to feel decay,
And calmly waits to *pass away*,

Like some great spirit, bless'd and pure,
That smiling waits the final hour
To cast aside earth's cumbrous load,
And upward wing its flight to God,
To join the ransomed throng above,
Where all is joy and peace and love.

Who has not felt the soothing power
Of Autumn's silent twilight hour ?
The great moon, like a golden shield,
Casts magic light o'er hill and field ;
A calm sweet peace seems shed abroad,
That lifts the spirit up to God—
To Him to whom our hearts should rise,
Who rules all nature, earth, and skies.

Creatures that shun the light of day
Come forth at eve to sport and play ;
The owl and night-hawk seek their food
Through the green fields that skirt the wood ;
The timorous hare and rabbit shy
Hide in the grass as we pass by ;
And moths and insects, painted fair,
Float joyous through the evening air.

The noise of youth at evening play
Comes from the village up the way,

And happy groups we oftentimes meet,
Singing in chorus low and sweet ;
Perchance love song or Border lay
Wakes echoes from yon ruin grey,
Where once the nightly warders trod,
To guard from foes their rude abode.

The caw of rooks from Shawdon's trees
Comes floating on the rising breeze ;
For ages there they 've found retreat
In Winter's cold and Summer's heat ;
A Father's bounty doth their needs supply
From those fair vales that round them lie ;
They have no garners flowing o'er
With golden grain for Winter's store.

An ancient steeple meets our eyes
Above the mist that round it lies,
A gray cold mist, that seems to weep
O'er those beneath, that silent sleep ;
They wait for that dread solemn hour
When God shall raise them by His power.

IN MEMORY OF THE LATE MRS IBBOTSON,
BELOVED WIFE OF THE REV. MR IBBOTSON,
GREAT AYTON, CLEVELAND, YORKSHIRE.

"Being dead, yet speaketh."

LIKE to a rose whose fallen bloom
Sends up to heaven its rich perfume ;
The fallen leaves that withered lie,
Waft their sweet incense to the sky.

Meet type of her whose loss we mourn,
Whose spirit now has crossed that bourn,
And entered where they are at rest
Whom earthly cares no more molest.

No outward badge of Christ she wore,
But in her heart the cross she bore ;
Her soul o'erflowed with gentle love
For men below and God above.

She watched the young with tender care
From every vile and hurtful snare,

And strove to guide them on the road
That leads to happiness and God.

Her call was not "aloud to cry"
To giddy throng that hurries by ;
But, with a woman's gentle love,
She tried their thoughtless hearts to move.

For all she sent the secret prayer
To Him who makes mankind His care,
That He would send the Spirit down,
His own bless'd work on earth to crown.

All earthly things she "counted loss ;"
She only lived to bear the cross,
Which she on earth has now laid down,
To wear in heaven her promised crown.

TIME, LIKE A RIVER, ROLLS ALONG !

WRITTEN ON NEW-YEAR'S DAY.

OH ! deem it not a vain or idle dream :
We all are sailors on this mighty stream.
Another noted landmark now is passed ;
To many voyagers it may prove the last.
But let us look around upon the throng
Of fellow-voyagers as we sail along.
See yonder, now a gallant bark appears ;
With steady hand and sure the helmsman steers ;
Mark with what care he passed the sunken rock,
On which full many a gallant bark has broke.
Though beacons shed abroad their warning light
To guide the mariner's dark course aright,
Some careless steer, and, with unwatchful eye
To mark and see where hidden dangers lie,
Unconscious of their course, they sail along,
And spend the night with heedless mirth and song,
Until, at last, they strike some hidden reef,
Where human power can seldom give relief—

The fatal rocks where thousands daily fall :
Some term them passion, some intemp'rance call ;
But from them you may hear the wretched cry
For help from man, or mercy from on high,
When, sailing smooth, they spurn the light of
Heaven.

To guide the voyager's course that light was given :
This light the watchful mariner descries,
And ever keeps as pole-star in his eyes.
When tempests roar, and darkness clouds the night,
The compass guides him on his course aright ;
His chart tells where the hidden rocks abound,
Where foaming breakers dash with sullen sound.
He knows he sails the dang'rous deep,
And is for ever watchful not to sleep.
But hark ! now as he glides along
And turns his sails with joyous song,
He feels his heart rise with the breeze,
And in each cloud new beauty sees :
He sees the banks in beauty drest,
Where all seem happy—all seem blest ;
Each passing headland brings to view
Scenes ever varied, ever new.
At last a dim haze meets his eyes,
He knows that there the ocean lies.
Long has he wished upon its breast
To strike his sails and be at rest ;

But ah ! the dang'rous bar—it must be crossed,
Where many a noble bark 's been lost.
To pierce the gloom he strains his eye—
Hark ! hark ! he hears the Pilot cry !
Joy of all joys ! with beating trustful heart
He yields the helm to His unerring art !

THE BLIND MAN'S DREAM.

Oh ! lead me forth, my own sweet child !
The sun, you say, shines bright ;
I love to feel his warming rays,
Though I cannot see his light.

Oh ! lead me to the green turf-seat,
Beneath the old ash-tree ;
And then, my child, you'll join your mates ;
I love to hear your glee.

I'd rather hear your merry laugh,
So happy and so wild,
Than be by sensuous revelry
In pleasure's haunts beguiled.

Oh ! how I love to hear your laugh,
So full of happy glee !
Oh ! the glad mem'ries it revives,
Memories dear to me !

Oh ! can it be my eyeballs dim
Have got their wonted light,

And here again on earth I see
Her angel form so bright ?

I do not wish her here again,
Where all is care and woe,
But rather would I join her there,
And to her bright world go.

I see her beckon with her hand,
I hear her whisp'ring say,
“Why do you linger here below ?
Haste, haste, and come away !”

Methinks I see her lovely face
With more than beauty shine,
A dazzling light around it plays,
A beauty all divine.

Is this a vision of my brain,
That seems to float in light ?
For round her is a glorious train,
Familiar to my sight.

I thought I heard her mellow voice
Sound high a heavenly theme :
A child's sweet voice my slumber broke,
Alas ! I did but dream.

HEART MEMORIES.

THERE are mem'ries treasured in the heart
Which tongue hath never told,
Nor would their rich possessors sell
For worlds of glittering gold.
Our sacred treasure's guarded fast,
With more than miser care ;
We would not our bright gems display
To the rude world's stare.

The heart that has no mem'ries dear
Is like an empty spring,
Which to the weary travller's heart
No healing waters bring.
But he whose soul is stored with these
Has more than jewels rare ;
He carries daily in his heart
A cure for biting care.

When tired of life's steep rugged road,
He cheers his weary way

With mem'ries sweet of days long past,
That seem but yesterday.
Perchance the forms of dear old friends
Up in review he brings ;
They pass through memory's golden gate
On soft and downy wings.

But there 's a form, when all is fled,
That ne'er doth pass away,
To mem'ry's eye 'tis never lost
The livelong night and day.
Oft has that form brought peace and hope
Back to the troubled heart,
And made the tears of bliss and joy
Unconsciously to start.

The soft sweet tear of memory,
Like blessed summer rain,
Quickens the dried-up weary heart,
And bids it smile again.
Who has not felt the soothing power
Of mem'ry's soft'ning tear,
When into that rich treasure-house,
We enter without fear ?

THE EXILE'S RETURN.

COME, my Jeanie, let us wander
By yon fairy-haunted stream ;
It warbles sweet as when we parted
In the days of youth's sweet dream.

Oft when I was lonely straying
On a far, far distant shore,
Here in fancy I was roaming
With you as in days of yore.

When silent eve, with noiseless step,
Came creeping o'er the lonely deep ;
By its murmur'ring shore I wandered
Till Nature's voice was hushed in sleep.

And when I pressed my lonely couch,
In dreams I wandered far away ;
I gambolled on the village green,
Or on the lonely banks of Spey.

And when the morning's downy light
Crept up the sky on golden wing,

Then all the birds in chorus woke,
And made the air with music ring.

'Twas not the song of that dear thrush
That sounds so sweet from yonder tree,
Nor yet the ringdove's am'rous note,
Whose ev'ning song is dear to me ;

Naught could cheer my drooping heart,
'Twas like a withered sapless tree ;
I longed to tread my native heath,
And see my Jane, so dear to me.

Never more shall riches tempt me
With its empty glittering store ;
Never more I'll wander from thee,
Nor quit again my native shore.

HASTE TO THE BRIDAL.

WRITTEN ON THE MARRIAGE OF LORD LORNE TO THE
PRINCESS LOUISE.

GATHER, gather, men of the heather,
Haste ye all to the bridal this day!

Our young chief of Lorne
We'll toast high this morn,
And wish him great joy this day.

Our clan feuds are ended,
Our best breath we'll spend it,
And shout for the Campbells, hurra ! hurra !

Gather, gather ! we'll muster and pray
For joy to the daughter of Albert this day.

Bride of a nation !
High is your station ;
You're wedded to ever-true Scotland this day.
Our best blood we'll spend it,
Your hearth to defend it,
And shout for the Campbells, hurra ! hurra !

Like our mountain pine and heather,
May you both live long together ;

Your hearts closer twining
As life keeps declining,
Your love never fade nor decay.
This life may you spend it,
That in peace you may end it,
Every true Scottish heart will pray,
For our young couple this day—this day.

Gather, gather, the loyal and true,
Men of plaid and bonnets of blue ;
Our mountain tops high
Shall echo our cry
Of “God save our Queen” this day.
'Mid cares that annoy,
May the thought give her joy,
That she by a nation is loved this day,
Who for their dear Sovereign will pray this day.

Our Queen loves her home among the heather,
There sweetest memories round her gather,
Of days that are past and gone,
When she walked not alone,
But had Albert by her side,
Whose gentle spirit still
Seems to haunt each glen and hill,
And our Queen loves still to stray,
Through those scenes on Autumn day.

BELL THE CAT:

A CHRISTMAS TALE FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

(Written at the request of a little boy.)

MILLER WHITTLE was just what a miller should be ;
He sung like a blackbird and worked like a bee.
First thing in the morning the hopper he 'd fill,
Then he went to the race and set on the mill ;
The water rushed down with a dash and a splash,
And the mill went to work with a rumbling crash.
Clack, clack! went the hopper, and down came the meal,
Then off singing to breakfast the miller would steal,
His face shining red like ripe cherries in June,
Transparent like amber and covered with bloom ;
His eyes had a twinkle of good-humoured glee,
That spoke of a kind heart you plainly could see.
To all folks alike he was loving and kind,
His equal in England you hardly could find.
The beggars all round found their way to the mill,
For they knew that the miller their meal bags would
fill ;
To the lame and the lazy, the vile and the good,
He gave a night's shelter and plenty of food ;



The ewes on the hill would come bounding with
glee,
And they bleated with pleasure the miller to see,
For a sieve full of corn he often would bring,
And feed them like children arranged in a ring ;
While the pigs on their hind-legs looked over the stye,
And grunted with rapture whene'er he came nigh ;
Hens, ducks, and pigeons flocked by the score,
To be fed by the miller round the mill-door.

Most men have a dislike to this thing or to that,
And the miller he hated the sight of a cat ;
So the mice at the mill had it all their own way,
And did as they liked both by night and by day ;
For they feasted like lords on his milk and his meal,
And butter and cheese they did wantonly steal.
Oft at night when the miller went snugly to rest,
They would creep into bed and lie down on his
breast.

One night, as he lay 'tween a sleep and a doze,
He felt a wee mousie fast eating his nose ;
Then he shouted aloud, " Wifey, strike up a light !
My own canny woman, I have had a sore fright.
It is blood, wife, ay, truly ! what say you to that ?
They will soon take our lives if we don't get a cat.
If they let me see morning with the sight of my eyes,
I'll make them repent ere the sun leaves the skies."

So the old miller borrowed, the very next day,
Lame Lizzy's tom-cat, all so glossy and grey.
Tom scanned his new home with a grave solemn air,
And looked as important 's a clown at a fair.
Refreshed with new milk, he sat stroking his beard,
When a scuffle and squeak in the chamber was heard.
Tom said to himself, " My old friends are up there ! "
Then quickly as lightning he mounted the stair.
The mice fled before him like the fast fleeting wind,
But a dozen met death that no refuge could find.
The news (like ill news) were soon spread through
the mill,
And dismay and terror each mouse heart did fill ;
It was said that a creature with fire-flashing eyes
Had dropped to devour them direct from the skies ;
Some said it walked, and some declared that it flew,
But no mouse could escape it, they very well knew.
'Mongst the mice at the mill there was fear and dismay,
As pining with hunger in their dark holes they lay,
And the tears from their little dark bead-eyes did steal,
As they thought of the past with its milk and its meal,
And the sweet hours they 'd spent in revel and play,
Dancing and romping through the mill night and day.
At last they resolved that a meeting take place,
To consider some means to improve their sad case ;
So while Tom took his nap in the miller's arm-chair,
The mice held their meeting in trembling and fear.

In an empty old meal-kist the meeting took place,
Where no preying cat could present his foul face.
Then Alderman Mouseman was called to the chair ;
When he rose up to speak all gave a loud cheer.
The chairman stood up on a billet of wood
That in corner of meal-kist luckily stood.
He said, " I see mice here with talent and skill,
Who could state far more clearly our rights to the
mill ;
For *we* have a right, that I'll boldly maintain,
To do as we like with the meal and the grain.
What is this *here* miller but a tenant-at-will,
With no legal right to his means or his mill ?
But our rights from our fathers we clearly can
trace,
Who for ages have lived upon this *here* place.
I see our friend Councillor Fieldmouse is here,
And he is the man that can make our case clear."
Then Councillor Fieldmouse stood up and said
 " Hem !
I feel, Mr Chairman, as if in a dream,
I cannot find words that would fully express
How deeply I feel our sad state and distress.
You all know, my friends, how this matter arose ;
Some young thoughtless mouse bit the old miller's
 nose ;
For this, the old tyrant is going to kill

Every *bit* mouse in his house and his mill.
I now call on this meeting to join as one mouse,
To drive this vile man from his mill and his house,
And I am sure, my dear friends, you are all well aware,
That we must move in this matter with caution and
care.

This vile wicked cat by some means we must kill,
Before we are masters of the house or the mill."

Then old Madam Shrewmouse bawled out with a
squeak,

" Will you allow, Mr Chairman, an old female to
speak ?

I hate all palavers, with your hums and your haws :
There is no need for caution in such a good cause.

If you only will act upon what I suggest,
And deprive the old miller of comfort and rest ;
I would tease and torment him by night and by day,
I would scratch out his eyes while sleeping he lay,
His bags in the mill to shreds I would tear,

And leave him no atom of clothing to wear ;
For such tyrants as he ought never to live :
So kill him at once is the advice that I give ;
But if any one thinks he can better my plan,
Let him stand up on his legs and speak out like a
man."

Then up started young Fopmouse with fine swelling
dash,

He bowed to the chair, and then stroked his mous-tache,

And said, "Mr Chairman, and all present here,"

The whole thing, to my mind, is easy and clear:

This vile wicked cat is our deadliest foe,

And never is seen till he deals a death-blow.

'A cat has nine lives,' I have heard people say,

And sees better in darkness than ev'n in day.

If we could tie round his neck a small tinkling bell,

It would ring when he moved, and his coming would tell.

Now, my worthy friends all, what say you to that?"

With one voice they shouted "Bell the cat! bell the cat!"

Then said old Father Dormouse, hoary with age,

"Friends, listen to me, for I've lived in a cage.

Hodge, my first owner, was a labourer meek,

Who prayed by proxy just once every week;

He fed me with crumbs and the best that he had,

But said that the world in general was bad.

For riches and wealth he felt no great desire,

But would have been glad if his wages were higher;

Not that he cared for wealth or very rich food,

But riches would give him the means to do good.

This Hodge had a love both for nature and art,

And could tell how far heaven and earth were apart;

He knew all the laws that regulate force,
And said the same power ruled a planet and horse.
He kept me, he said, to enlighten his mind,
And to prove if old age caused the mouse to grow
blind.

One day to his cottage a pious lady came in,
And said, 'Don't you think it a very great sin
To keep a poor mouse shut up in this way,
Exposed to the light and sunshine of day?
For they are like sinners, who love not the light,
And do all their deeds in the darkness of night.'
'Mam,' said good old Hodge, 'it is just as you say,
Mice were made for the night, and not for the day,
For we see in all nature a purpose and plan,
All guided by rule save the offspring of man.'
'Hodge, a right clever man you are in your way,'
And the lady wished Hodge and his wife a good day.
That hour, Mr Chairman, my knowledge began
Of the world in gen'ral, of woman and man;
For the very next day by Hodge I was sold
To a trav'lling showman for sovereign in gold.
The showman (as he called it) put me to school,
And taught me to act by square and by rule.
Poised on my hind-legs, he taught me to stand,
Dressed like a parson in cassock and band;
Then I pretended to read, in a droll squeaking way,
With specks on my nose to bow and to sway;

Then dressed like a fop in the very first style,
With my pipe, a switch and a fash'nable *tile*,
Smoothing my beard, I strolled slowly along,
Humming the tune of a doggerel song.
I soon became known as ‘the wonderful mouse,’
And drew to my master many a full house.
‘Ladies and gentlemen,’ twas his custom to say,
‘Here now is a sight seldom seen in our day ;
This wonderful creature’s the white mouse of Moab,
Common in the days of the patriarch Job.
This *here* is the species, I am credibly told,
The Philistines fashioned and carved out in gold ;
Brought to this country by traveller last year,
I bought it, I assure you, at a price very dear.
Ladies and gentlemen, see this *fact* with your eyes,
I’m not like quack doctors who tell nothing but lies.’
My life, Mr Chairman, was a burden to me,
I need not tell how much I longed to be free.
One night as we drove down a very steep hill,
The van was upset and I escaped to the mill ;
From slavery and bondage to liberty dear,
You don’t know the contrast, that is very clear.
My friends, I advise you to alter your plan,
And respect the old miller, for he’s a good man.”
At this sage advice there were hisses and cries
Of “Down with old Dormouse, and blacken his eyes !
He knows nought of life but the vulgar and low,
And has spent all his time in a travelling show.”

'Midst all this confusion and wildest uproar,
The miller and Tom came in at the door ;
They both heard the noise that came from the kist,
And fell on the mice ere ever they wist.
A good hearty kick, with a push and a thrust,
Sent all the pack flying—the old kist to dust ;
The miller laid round him with hearty good will,
While Tom did his work with calmness and skill.

Now the miller sleeps soundly, free from all fear,
And Tom does the same in the old arm-chair.
Thus the mice were like some little folks we've seen,
That are never content—you may know who I mean—
They want to have something they do not possess,
Perhaps a new suit or a fine muslin dress ;
And then, like the mice, they fall into mischief,
Which is sure to end quickly in sorrow and grief.
There are some bigger children, whose hair is nigh grey,
That are never content with the times, as they say,
With them, nothing is right, but everything wrong,—
This cannot last long, is their chorus and song.

Now, dear children all, I have a last word to say,
Be sure to get *wisdom* before you grow grey ;
And when merry at Christmas and Happy New Year,
May your best friends be there to enjoy your good
cheer !



"THE KAIL BROSE O' AULD SCOTLAND."

LET English chiels their roast-beef crack,
Their puddings plump, and a' that ;
We 'll ne'er despise our lang-kail brose,
For beef we canna fa that.
They sneer and laugh at Sawny's taste
For crowdy, brose, and a' that ;
Say they, " We 'll eat his black-faced sheep,
And gie'm the *head* to chaw at." ,

Nae doubt we send them nowt and sheep,
Our pigs and hens, and a' that ;
But aye keep fat to grease our sheen,
And taste our gabs, and a' that.
When Yule comes roun', we get our fill
O' flesh and fish, and a' that,
And ance or twice throughout the year,
But aftener canna fa that.

An Englishman gets roast and boiled,
Wi' puddings het, and a' that ;

And then he maun hae beer to drink,
An’ no content wi’ a’ that.
But then we get our ’taries het,
Boiled in their skins, an’ a’ that ;
And maybe whiles a herring sma’,
But seldom we can fa that.

But can they boast mair sturdy chielis,
Fed on their beef and a’ that,
Than we can do, fed on kail brose,
On crowdy, broth, and a’ that ?
I winna boast our hasty brose,
Our stir-about, and a’ that ;
They may do when they’re butter’d nice,
Wi’ pepper, salt, and a’ that.

They ca’ our porridge, wi’ sour-milk,
But fit for pigs, and a’ that ;
But then we canna grease our beards
Wi’ butter’d toast, and a’ that.
Our lairds themsells can only get
Beef, pudding, toast, and a’ that ;
If we would eat sic dainties nice,
They’d raise our rents, and a’ that.

Let Frenchmen eat their frogs an’ mice,
Their nasty stews, and a’ that ;

And Paddy boast his 'taties nice,
Wi' butter-milk, and a' that ;
And Johnnie Bull may eat his full
Of beef and pork, and a' that ;
A heapit bicker o' kail brose,
Is Scotland's yet, for a' that.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE FIELD OF
CULLODEN.

(DEDICATED TO SAUNDERS M'GREGOR, WHOSE GREAT-
GRANDFATHER FELL ON THAT MEMORABLE DAY.)

DARK lowered the night, the morn was grey,
That ushered in Culloden's day—
That day of blood, and hate, and strife,
When man from man sought life for life.

Oh ! could my muse like Ossian's tell
How clansmen fought, how foemen fell,
And how the Saxons, clad in steel,
Before their foes were made to reel—

Reeled as a bark by tempest tossed,
A moment seen, then all is lost—
Lost in the billowy surge of war :
Their deafening yell was heard afar.

Oh ! need I tell how chieftains led,
And for their Prince like martyrs bled ?
Or need I tell how dauntless they
Against such odds urged on the fray ?

How oft above the battle yell,
Each gathering cry was heard to swell ;
And like a lion pressed for life,
Each cheered his followers to the strife ?

See yon proud host, when conscious they
By numbers great must gain the day !
See how their hate impels them on !
Their rallying cry is, “ Quarter ? None ! ”

What ear can listen, tongue rehearse,
Their deeds ?—t would stain the vilest verse.
Then let their leader’s blasted name
From age to age be crowned with shame !

See yon proud host who never fled !
See how they’re on by heroes led !
Death unto them has terrors none,
If their dear country’s honour’s gone !

But, ah ! that day the fates had sworn
That few so brave should see the morn ;
Though brave they fought and nobly fell—
That dire defeat should ring their knell.

Oh ! here let Scotia drop a tear
For those brave sons she held so dear !
Dear to their country is their name—
They long shall be her minstrels’ theme.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

FRIENDSHIP and Love conjointly claim
The same pure essence, but a diff'rent name.
But what have they in common ? Search and see ;
To find a likeness puzzles me.
Love, like a playful, thoughtless child,
Often by fancy is beguiled.
And see how oft the silly thing
Will to a lady's ringlets cling ;
Even the glancing of an eye
Will make his maddened pulse beat high.
Sometimes a red and pimpled nose
His godship in hysterics throws ;
Ay ! ev'n a crimson bloated cheek
Will keep him bedfast for a week.
Why should we blush to speak the truth ?
The deadliest weapon is the mouth ;
Though like a snake with death it 's fraught,
The silly fool longs for the draught ;
He tastes, and feels the deadly smart
Of lurking poison at his heart.
Sometimes he is like amorous dove,
A shining neck will fatal prove ;

Round it you see him fondly cling,
Just like a bat on out-stretched wing.
Oft has a slender taper waist
Upset his godship's sweetest rest ;
Ev'n worse than that, in wild despair
He 's cut life's thread to ease his care.
Look down, ye powers ! and blush to see 't,
His godship at a lady's feet ;
Grovelling, fast to them he clings,
Though in the dust he soil his wings.
Friendship, be mine ; I claim your hand,
And swear by you to fall or stand ;
To me more dear thy friendly grip
Than all the talk of Cupid's lip.

EARL PERCY'S WEDDING-DAY.

MEN of Alnwick ! shout and sing
Till our castle turrets ring ;
Earl Percy home a flower will bring
 He has pulled this day,
A tender, blooming, sweet young thing
 Off the mountains grey.

God 'fend his bonny heather-bell,
And bring her safe to lowland dell ;
May sons unborn yet joyful tell,
 Of this happy day ;
God shield them from misfortunes fell,
 From our hearts we pray.

May Percy bless to 's latest hour
The day he culled his Highland flower,
And brought her to his English bower,
 His heart's best treasure ;
May dark misfortune's clouds ne'er lower
 To spoil their pleasure.

Flower of an ancient glorious stock !
Child of the *mist* and mountain rock !

Your ancient tree oft bore war's shock
And felt the blow,
But still stood firm when others broke,
And now lie low.

The name of your great martyred sire*
Stirs in our hearts the latent fire :
To such a name may you aspire
In future story ;
God shield you from a fate so dire
As crowned his glory !

Flower of a noble warlike race !
We greet you from this ancient place ;
God of your fathers grant you grace
To fill your station :
May sons and daughters nobles grace
In this great nation.

We're proud of Percy's honoured name,
So famed in ancient warlike theme ;
First in the fight their swords did gleam,
And death's blows shower ;
But now their pennons peaceful stream
From yon grey tower.

* The great Marquis of Argyle, beheaded 27th May 1685.—“I could die like a Roman, but choose rather to die as a Christian. I set the crown upon the King's head, but he gives me a better crown than his own,” said the great Argyle.



No longer from yon portal grey
A Percy rides to Border fray ;
No bleeding host at close of day
Now enters there,
Behind whom dying comrades lay
All spoiled and bare.

Long may their banners peaceful hing,
Their spears no more in battle ring,
But future bards their vict'ries sing
In virtue's race,
And future lords their wisdom bring
To bless this place.

God bless the two made one this day,
Sincere we men of Alnwick pray,
Be 't thiers to see their children grey,
And great and wise ;
That crowds at *last* their dust may lay
With tearful eyes.

MY OWN FIRESIDE.

THERE is a halo round the poor man's hearth
Shines on his own fireside,
And cheers his weary downcast heart,
That is oft sorely tried ;
Through the toilsome day his thoughts will stray,
And there with pleasure 'bide,
Cheered with the hope of joys to come
Around his own fireside.

In that sacred spot, that heaven on earth,
The poor man's own fireside,
May love and peace find there a place,
In every heart preside.
Though coarse his fare, and daily toil
Is still the poor man's lot,
Content and hope may crown his board,
And sanctify the spot.

Perchance around his humble board
A numerous offspring stand ;
Though scanty clad and humbly fed,
They're nourished by his hand.

The pious man, with thankful heart,
Sends up a prayer on high,
For God to grant them daily bread,
And guide them with His eye.

His little flock at evening-tide
Meets round the fire to play,
And laugh together o'er the sports
That pleased them through the day.
Oh ! happy hours when the children sport
Like kittens round the fire ;
They 're angels sent to bless the house,
And draw our thoughts up higher.

But, cheerless homes, alas ! there are
In this dear land of ours :
No sunshine of the soul comes in
To nurse life's tender flowers ;
But clouds and darkness hover o'er
Their fireless hearths and home,
That drive the half-clad children forth,
With vice and sin to roam.

The starving mother, pinched and worn,
Sits helpless with despair,
Her heart bleeds for the infant form
That plays around her chair :

The father, guardian of their hearth,
Is faithless to his trust,
In drunken revels spends his time
In the vile haunts of lust.

LINES WRITTEN ON THE TOP OF
BENRINNES,

DURING A VISIT TO STRATHSPEY IN AUGUST 1869.

Now here again I take my rest
Upon this mountain's rugged crest.
Although it's not by Nature dressed
The heart to cheer,
There is no spot my foot has pressed
To me more dear.

Far as I scan o'er hill and plain,
I mark each well-known spot again ;
Then up comes Fancy with her train
Of scenes long past—
Of clansmen rushing from each glen
To pibroch's blast.

Instead of warlike mountaineer,
That sought the carnage with a cheer,
The frugal sons of toil appear
In every place ;
These smiling valleys far and near
Are blessed with peace.

To eastward now I cast my eye,
And Moray's fertile plains descry,
With golden fields spread to the sky
 Fair to be seen,
Where fatt'ning herds recumbent lie
 On richest green.

And now I turn my feasted eyes
To where you see yon smoke arise ;
There Elgin's ancient city lies,
 Boast of the land ;
There busy man his commerce plies
 With ardent hand.

But tired with gazing on the plain,
I turn to dear Strathspey again ;
I mark the river join the main
 'Midst foam and spray ;
Backward I trace its course again
 To mountains grey.

Yonder, embowered in living green,
Proud Castle Gordon's towers are seen,
With many a verdant glade to screen
 Idlers that stray
'Neath spreading trees, love's favourite scene,
 At close of day.

My wandering eyes with pleasure rest
Upon Beneagen's pine-clad breast,
Where, sheltered like some cosy nest,

A home appears

The poor and needy oft have blessed
Amid their tears.

That graceful arch the river clears
Where Craigellachie's rock up-rears ;
All egress on that side appears

Man's skill to mock ;

But yet his toil a highway clears
Through solid rock.

I mark where stood M'Allan's shrine,
Where many a warrior's bones recline—
Brave warriors of that ancient line
That stood war's shock,
Firm as the hardy mountain pine
That crowns the rock.

From this I turn to gaze upon
A mansion built of polished stone ;
And this fair spot doth virtue own
With maiden grace,
With open hand her bounty sown
Through all the place.

There Elchie's turrets meet the sky,
High o'er the woods that round them lie,—
Woods that a hermit might envie
 And find a place ;
But forms amongst them often stray
 Would mar his peace.

Where yon blue curling smoke doth rise,
Old Carron's ancient homestead lies ;
To it the traveller turns his eyes
 And feasts them there,
Where verdant fields spread to the skies
 Like garden fair.

A fairer spot is seldom seen,
Embowered 'mid trees of living green,
With many a ferny glade between
 And bosky dells ;
The home of Grant it long has been,
 As history tells.

Scenes meet my eyes on every hand,
The pride and glory of our land ;
Famed spots, whose names will ever stand
 In future story,
Firm as the giant hills around
 In all their glory.

Years have fast and silent fled
Since last along those vales I strayed,
And many a head is lowly laid
 That shared my joy,
There silent in the narrow bed,
 Nought to annoy.

With sobered thoughts I take my way
Where once I spent life's happy day ;
A voice within me seems to say—
 All now is changed ;
No more with comrades dear you'll stray
 Where oft you ranged :

For some have crossed the rolling deep,
To torrid climes where reptiles creep ;
Untimely there they sleep death's sleep,
 Ne'er to return ;
And for them childless mothers weep,
 And sadly mourn.

LAMENT,

WRITTEN ON READING OF THE DEATH OF THE LATE
EARL OF FIFE.

How can my muse now joyous sing ?
How can she strike the vocal string ?
She sighing droops her dowie wing,
Wi' grief opprest ;
Her fondest hopes did round him cling
That's gane to rest.

Oh ! cruel Death ! thy fatal dart
Hath pierced his warm and feeling heart,
An' we aneath the stroke maun smart,
An' sadly groan.
Wha noo will tak' the widow's part,
Whan he is gone ?

Whaur noo will puir folks, in their need,
Tak' shelter frae th' oppressor's greed ?
They noo maun bend them like a reed—
Their stay is gone ;
He was the poor man's friend indeed,
They're left alone.

72 LAMENT ON THE DEATH OF THE EARL OF FIFE.

Nane frae his door he turned awa ;
He ne'er was deaf to sorrow's ca' ;
When cottars' backs were at the wa',
 He heard their tale,
An' took their part, baith ane an' a',
 An' wished them weel.

Feint ane cared less for pride an' state,
Nor sat mair lightly on his seat ;
His smiling face was aye a treat
 To look upon ;
His feeling heart was truly great,
 But that is gone.

Nae social gatherins noo he 'll grace,
Wi' kindly smile upon his face ;
But lone and empty is the place
 He graced wi' ease ;
Nae mair will joy licht up the face
 That aye could please.

Come a' ye bards frae Ness to Dee,
Frae Cairngorum to the sea ;
Come join his cor'nach-wail wi' me—
 In chorus join ;
Pray that another like as he
 May fill his line.

Come, a' ye cottars, mourn the day
You saw him laid aneath the clay ;
Nae mair to him you 'll tak' yer way,
 Wi' heavy heart ;
Nae mair, alas ! he 'll be yer stay,
 Nor tak' yer part.

Let hireling bardies in their lays
The loudest sing to him that pays,
I scorn to follow in their ways—
 I only mourn
The noble man that lowly lies,
 Ne'er to return.

THE TRYSTING-TREE.

I KEN wha's waiting in the glen,
Beneath the trysting-tree ;
And, oh ! I ken his heart beats fast,
And a' for love o' me.
My blessing on yon bonnie star—
The star o' hope to me ;
It tells me that my Jamie waits
Beneath the trysting-tree.

I ken there's Nelly o' the bog
Would her broad acres gie,
If she could only get a glance
O' his soft pawky e'e.
Weel do I ken his heart's my ain,
Nane fairer does he see ;
And often has he told me this
Beneath the trysting-tree.

'Tis true he has nae acres broad,
Nor riches yet has he ;



But then he has a true, leal heart,
An' that's mair dear to me.
I wadna gie a stowan glance
Frae his saft, sparklin' e'e,
To be a queen, and change my place
Beneath the trysting-tree.

Awa wi' wealth, awa wi' pelf—
Can they mak' hearts agree ?
If for their sake we sell our love,
Can there true pleasure be ?
Gie me the kind, the loving heart,
That shines out through the e'e ;
And such a smile I've often seen
Beneath the trysting-tree.

Now lordly dames may laugh at this,
Nor think that love could be,
Or noble thoughts rise in a heart
Wi' naething else tae gie.
It's nae the shining dust o' earth
That mak's the man to me ;
But noble thoughts and burning words
I've heard beneath yon tree.

But now the moon, wi' laughin' face,
Peeps o'er Beneagan hie,

An' I'll down by the gowan bog,
Where nane I'm sure can see ;
For weel I ken he anxious waits,
Wi' keen and piercing e'e.
Oh ! speed the time we meet for aye
Beneath our ain roof-tree.

TO MY ROBIN REDBREAST.

Now keenly blows the northern blast,
Like winter hail the leaves fall fast,
And my pet Robin's come at last
 To our old thorn ;
With warbling throat and eye upcast
 He greets the morn ;

Like some true friend you come to cheer,
When all around is dark and drear.
And oh ! what friend to me more dear
 Than your sweet sel' ?
Your mellow voice falls on my ear
 Like some sweet spell.

Oft at the gloaming's pensive hour,
When clouds above me darkly lower,
I've sought a seat in some lone bower,
 With heart opprest ;
You soothed me with your magic power,
 And calmed my breast.

When morning dons her sober grey
To usher in the coming day,
And Phœbus shines with sickly ray
On all around,
No warblers greet him from the spray
With joyous sound.

But you, sweet bird, unlike the throng,
Salute him with a joyous song.
When heavy rains and sleet prolong
The dreary day,
You chant to him your evening song
Upon the spray.

No blackbird whistles in the grove,
Where late in chorus sweet they strove ;
No warbler's tongue is heard to move,
But all is sad ;
No cushat woos his amorous love
In hazel glade.

TO THE SNOWDROP.

FAIREST and first of a glorious train !
I bid you welcome, sweet flower, again ;
For you come the first of the floral band
We shall soon see spread over all the land.
Though no vernal sun, with life-giving ray,
Bids you welcome on this wintery day,
You come like angel with message of love—
A pledge of remembrance from Heaven above.

Sweet little flower ! as you spring by my door,
You teach me a lesson unheeded before,
Of Him who thee ordains to spring and blow
Amid keen biting winds and sleety snow ;
Fit emblem thou of that mystery deep,
When man again will rise from death's long sleep ;
From the womb of earth he 'll spring like a flower
To be gathered by God for His heavenly bower.

Sweet little flower ! as you spring by my door,
You bid me hope on 'mid my scanty store,

And bravely trust, amid the cares and strife,
And the weary toil of this up-hill life.
In the dark cheerless morn I pass you by,
Toiling and growing 'neath a sunless sky,
And I've thought, perchance, e'er the dark day close,
You may find a grave 'neath the wint'ry snows.

Sweet little flower ! as you spring by my door,
You teach me more than e'er I knew before
Of the heartfelt pleasure a flower can give,
For it is not in vain you bloom and live.
But thoughtless man, on earthly pleasure bent,
No wisdom sees in the flowers that are sent ;
A heavenly mentor, by his path you stand,
And bid him pause and think of the better land.

Sweet little flower ! as you spring by my door,
I love you more than I e'er did before,
For the very same Hand that made you a flower,
Made heaven and earth by the word of His power,
And gave to my spirit a feeling of love,
A longing desire for the garden above ;
For the flowers never fade in that glorious land,
Like Him who has made them, immortal they stand.

"THERE'S A PRETTY WEE HOUSIE
PROVIDIN' FOR ME."

DEDICATED TO THE MORAY LASSES.

THERE's a pretty wee housie providin' for me,
And in it, I trow, we shall soon happy be ;
There isna the like o't, I'm sure, in the glen,
Wi' sae canty a *but*, an' sae coothie a *ben*.
It's true we'll hae naething sae grand or sae braw,
As the great folks wha live in a castle or ha' ;
But I am sure we'll hae plenty, if only content,
And thankfu' to Him who our blessings has sent.

I ken we'll be happy :—our housie will be
A little bit heaven to Jamie and me ;
When cares shall oppress him, and sadden his face,
To soothe and divert him I ken it's my place ;
And when he comes hame frae his day's weary toil,
I'll hae a clean hearth, and a sweet winning smile ;
There's naething, I'm sure, he likes better to see,
Than a clean cosy hearth, and a smile upon me.

And when winter winds blaw wi' snell biting breath,
And Nature aroun' us is frozen in death,
We'll shut oot the day, wi' its glimmer o' licht,
And never complain o' a lang, weary nicht.
Whiles Jamie 'll read, or I'll lilt a bit sang,
And wi' cracking and joking we'll nae think it lang ;
And aye the last thing ere we gang to our rest,
We will seek His direction wha kens to guide best.

When summer comes roun' wi' its sweet sunny hours,
And breezes come laden wi' scent o' the flowers,
We'll stray by the burnie where scented birkis hing,
And listen how sweetly the birdies can sing.
Far, far frae the bustle and turmoil o' life,
We'll jog on life's journey and never ken strife ;
Wi' griefs we may meet that are ill to be borne,
To-day may seem dark, but we'll hope a bright morn.

We a' ken that riches can never buy health,
And a wise man has said that contentment is wealth ;
And if we have these, we'll be richer by far,
Than “my lord” who struts gaily wi' ribbon and star.
But contentment and riches may often be found,
Like a fruit-bearing tree, showering blessings around ;
And happy the spot where their branches are spread,
And happy the people that dwell in their shade.

A CHRISTMAS GREETING

TO MY KIND FRIEND, ANTHONY OLIVER GARDENER,
ESLINGTON PARK.

A MERRY Christmas, friend, I wish you !
May heaven with its blessings bless you !
B' it many a year before we miss you
 From that sweet spot
Where Providence has kindly placed you,
 And cast your lot.

Yule is a time to cheer the heart,
For friends to meet that are apart ;
The rich to heal the biting smart
 Of care and want,
For little cheers the drooping heart
 When bread is scant.

Oh ! that the rich folks only knew
What good a little wealth can do !
Alas ! I fear they are but few
 That think of this ;
But then they love the heavenly dew,
 The poor man's bliss.

I fear there's many a cupboard bare,
With neither bread nor Christmas fare,
While misery and dark despair
 Brood o'er the place ;
The smallest thing that we can spare
 Would help their case.

All that we have, it's God that sent it,
It's not our own, He's only lent it ;
For to do good we know He meant it,
 To all around ;
If foolishly we run and spend it,
 We're faithless found.

A gift this day from Heaven was sent—
God gave it us, it was not lent.
When angels o'er the manger bent
 They sang this song—
“ Lo ! now the Father's gift is sent,
 The promised long.”

This gift can cheer the humble cot,
Can sanctify the poor man's lot,
And consecrate the humblest spot
 In all the land ;
Brings honour to the russet coat
 And horny hand.



This gift is offered free to all,
To rich and poor, to great and small,
Men worldly treasures riches call ;
 But let them try,
They 'll find their value is but small
 This gift to buy.

What is this gift, of which we boast,
That men may have so free from cost ?
It is the innocence we lost
 That mournful day
When man the fatal bound'ry crossed
 Where evil lay.

Life's ills now cloud earth's fairest spot,
And come alike to hall and cot ;
Those ills *we make*, I 'll name them not,
 Make thousands weep,
And sore bewail their bitter lot
 In sorrow deep.

These ills make sad hearts long to rise,
And leave this earth, where sorrow tries,
For sinless world beyond the skies
 They long to go ;
But when man to heaven would rise,
 He aims too low.

And many a suffering soul 's opprest,
A thousand sorrows rend their breast ;
The grave alone can give that rest
 They seek in vain ;
Let 's strive to get their wrongs redrest,
 And save them pain.

Alas ! in this loved land of ours,
Where freedom's sun his radiance pours,
The thorns spring up amidst the flowers,
 And take their room,
And rob them of sweet vernal showers,
 And spoil their bloom.

When we our happy Christmas keep,
Let 's not forget that others weep,
For when we 're calm in peaceful sleep,
 There are I fear
Who 'll groan in anguish far too deep
 For sigh or tear.

But let us work, my friend, and pray
For strength and patience for our day,
And friends our old grey heads to lay
 In their last rest ;
May all that knew us kindly say,
 "They did their best."



THE TOOM MEAL-KIST.*

SUGGESTED BY READING AN EDITOR'S ARTICLE IN THE
"ELGIN COURANT," ENTITLED "RELIEF TO THE
POOR."

" 'Mang herds and honest country folk,
That till the farm and feed the flock,
Careless o' mair; wha never fash
To lade their kist wi' useless cash;
But thank the gods for what they 've sent
O' health eneugh and blithe content,
And pith that helps them to stravaig
Ower ilka cleugh and ilka craig.'"

—FERGUSSON.

YE that are happit snug and warm,
In these cauld winter days,
Ye canna feel the poor man's griefs,
His sorrows and his waes.
While ye sit roun' your cosy fires,
Wi' a' your comforts blest,
He sits beside his cheerless hearth
And eyes that toom meal-kist.

* Toom, empty; meal-kist—it was a common practice in Scotland to keep a store of meal in a kist or girnel.

Beside him sits his patient wife,
The partner o' his waes,
And wi' a mither's skill she mends
The bairnies' raggit claes ;
Then, wi' a noble woman's heart,
She bids him hope and trust,
That brighter days will soon be here,
To fill the toom meal-kist.

But while the words o' comfort flow
That cheer the downcast man,
A silent, unseen tear drops soft
Upon her wasted han'.
Oh ! who can tell what sorrows wring
A mother's loving breast,
While round her sleep those helpless things
Beside a toom meal-kist ?

Ye thoughtless throng, ye giddy fair,
That mad with folly flirt,
And try how many yards to wear,
In one enormous skirt ;
Like silly peacock, vain and proud,
Dear self fills all your breast ;
Look at that half-clad woman there
With but a toom meal-kist !

Ye rich guidwives, whose stores o'erflow
In larder and in press,
Oh ! think that He who blessed you so
Can quickly make them less.
If we a sister see in need,
And hard wi' want opprest,
A heavenly blessing will be ours,
To fill her toom meal-kist.

And you, rich, vain, proud man, who think
That you are Heaven's care,
Because He has filled your barns full
And left your neighbour's bare.
The poor in spirit, rich in faith,
By Heaven alone are blest,
And the poor man may be rich in full,
With but a toom meal-kist.

And you, ye mad and thoughtless throng,
That nightly round the bowl
Spend what would buy the orphans food
And cheer the widow's soul ;
But think how small the poor man's need,
And what ye thoughtless waste ;
'Twould bring a blessing on your head,
To fill his toom meal-kist.

ON THE DEATH OF THE YEAR 1855.

DEDICATED TO SAUNDERS M'GREGOR.

STEEK fast the door, an' dinna jingle ;
Draw ben your chair beside the ingle ;
Now tak' a glass to cheer your heart,
The best o' friens, alas ! maun pairt.
O Tibby, Tibby ! mak' less din,
Ye ken yersel' wha's sick within.
Puir Fifty-Five has ta'en his bed,
And ne'er again the grass will tread.
The Doctor says at twal' o'clock
He's sure to hae a mortal shock.
But hark ! he raps upon the hallan,
He cries, " Guidman, bring in the callan' !
Bring Fifty-Sax, for I must go
To dark oblivion's shades below.
And now, my son, just gie's your hand,
Ye ken I soon maun leave this land ;
And when I'm dead an' maist forgot,
There's some will try my name to blot.

I muckle doubt they 'll sair misca' me,
Aye, e'en to folk wha never saw me.
They 'll say I spent their cash for nougat,
And dear they paid for a' they bought.
They 'll say I made their pantries toom,
And kept a better frae my room.
A' this ye 'll hear, an' muckle mair ;
I ken my name they winna spare.
Let this, my son, ne'er grieve your heart,
But nobly act a manly pairt.
O Fifty-Sax ! propitious smile
On that dear spot called Britain's isle !
And open wide auld Nature's hand,
And scatter plenty o'er their land.
Oh ! send them peace wi' honour crowned,
And gird them safe wi' virtues round ;
And then, my son, I winna fear,
Ye 'll nobly fill your daddy's chair ! ”

LINES INSCRIBED TO SAUNDERS M'GREGOR,

A MEMBER OF THE ROUND-TABLE CLUB.
LEEDS, JULY 1857.

Here am I choked wi' dust and reek,
For rest and quiet I vainly seek,
Nought but the everlasting squeak
 Of rattling engines,
You scarce can hear a neighbour speak
 For their loud vengeance.

Here night and day our sky's o'ercast
Wi' choking reek from Mammon's blast,
So thick, that had a comet passed,
 We wadna kent it,
But lived in ignorance to the last
 That God had sent it.

O Saunders, man! were ye but here,
To see the bustling noise and steer!
Folks hardly can find time to speer
 For friend or foe;
A wink or nod, and past you clear,
 And on they go.



Weel may ye crack o' broomy knowes,
Where yet in peace the wild deer browse;
There's not on earth such heights and howes

As ye possess,
And bonny glens where cowslip grows
In golden dress.

You note each day the growing crap,
And rest yourself in Nature's lap,
And when inclined, you toddlin' stap
By glen or burn,
Where scented dews frae birch-trees drap
At every turn.

You little ken what ye possess;
Wi' blessings rife, you prize them less;
You've Nature decked in flowery dress
Your eyes to please,
And kind old friends your hand to press
And heart to ease.

But, ah! my friend, it's sad to think
How men the chains o' folly clink,
And oft prefer some stagnant sink
To Nature's rill;
At her sweet stream men seldom drink
And take their fill.

Oft when I read your social crack,
On memory's wings my fancy 's back
To simple joys, that ne'er did lack
A pleasure true :
But now men's brains are on the rack
For something new.

Pure simple pleasure gives a joy
Which softens cares that oft annoy ;
And never leaves that base alloy
O' future grief,
That does man's happiness destroy
Wi' no relief.

Forced by necessity's grim will,
Thousands do sweat in forge and mill ;
Seldom taste they of Nature's rill :
O' dust and reek
Day after day they drink their fill,
Till pale the cheek.

And, sad to think, there 's many seek
Their pleasure in what makes men weak ;
In filthy dens, where poisons reek,
Their evenings spend,—
A solace poor for toil-spent week—
When thus it ends.

Their home is not that sacred place,
The pure abode of joy and peace ;
And there we see the haggard face
 O' want and sin,
And misery we plainly trace
 On a' within.

We boast o' being rich and great,
A prosp'rous and a glorious state,
And that each man his bread may eat
 Beneath his tree;
But luxury may sap a state,
 Though great it be.

If with a retrospective eye
We view the years so long gone by,
A warning from them seems to cry,
 With outraged patience,
That there's a Power which rules on high,
 O'er men and nations.

MY LITTLE ROSEBUD.

My little rosebud, sweet and fair—
None fairer could be seen—
Bloomed sweetly 'neath my cottage eaves,
Amidst its leaves so green.

And all that passed my cottage door
Admired my lovely rose ;
They said it rivalled every flower
That in the garden grows.

With tender care I nursed my flower,
I joyed to see it grow,
And spread its petals to the sun,
Pure as the driven snow.

Safe from the sun's fierce burning rays,
I shielded it with care,
And when the evening dew fell soft,
Its fragrance filled the air.

Oft by its side I loved to sit,
When the day's toil was done,

Wondering what made sweet flowers grow,
While glorious sank the sun.

Then heavy thoughts stole o'er my heart,
I knew my flower must die,
And, like all earthly-born things,
Must wither and decay.

My boding fears, alas ! proved true,
For soon my lovely flower
Fell soiled and scattered on the earth,
Beneath a midnight shower.

I gathered up the fallen leaves,
That once were sweet and fair,
And in a drawer I them did lay,
With tender loving care.

When winter comes with sunless sky,
With darkness and with gloom,
My fallen rose of the summer,
With fragrance fills my room.

My rose to me a lesson taught,
That beauty, when alone,
Will never any fragrance yield,
When its fair colour 's gone.

A CHRISTMAS SONG.

WE hail again the natal morn
On which the Prince of Peace was born—
Born to draw us sinful men
Back to our Father's love again.
Again we raise the heavenly strain
Of "Peace on earth, good-will to men;"
God's choicest gift to man is given,
His own beloved Son from heaven.

But "Him we will not have to reign,"
Is still the universal strain;
And gentle Peace, with tearful eye,
Weeps where the slain in thousands lie.
Yes! at a despot's high command,
Men raise the fratricidal hand;
We, shuddering, turn our straining eyes
To where the groans of battle rise,

And wonder when this strife shall cease,
And nations long and pray for peace—

When shall come that glorious time,
When peace shall reign in every clime,
And men, like brothers, hand in hand,
Join in the sweet fraternal band
That owns that Prince's peaceful sway
Whose birth we celebrate to-day.

Let us the holly bring and bay
To deck our homes this festal day,
And stir the yule-log to a blaze,
While thankful we our songs do raise
To Him our Heavenly King above,
Who came this day in peace and love.
And soon may He descend again,
Upon this troubled earth to reign !

A SECOND EPISTLE TO SAUNDERS
M'GREGOR.

How pleasant is the summer day,
With dewy dawn and evening grey !
Then books and papers past we lay
 With right good will,
And with a crony saunt'ring stray
 Through glen or hill.

To me the *Times* has now no charms,
'Tis filled with nought but war's alarms,
Of mighty feats by men in arms,
 That kill and slay,
Just as the bees they kill in swarms
 On autumn day.

But I will say 't, and think no shame,
That I abhor a warlike theme,
All strife where swords and sulphur gleam,
 And bullets fly ;
War I prefer where, killed or lame,
 None writhing lie.

The war of wives, with head-gear torn,
I need not say that has my scorn,
Though hero-like the 're sometimes borne
 From off the field,
While of their locks perhaps they 're shorn,
 And bruised and peeled.

Domestic war, we know, is rife—
The war of words, without the knife ;
I mean, the war 'tween man and wife,
 Is sometimes bloody;
It seldom ends but with the life
 Of either body.

But let us turn to that famed field,
Where statesmen keen their weapons wield.
How deftly they can fence and shield,
 And cut and thrust !
Beneath their blows the brave have reeled,
 And bit the dust.

Two mighty champions take the field,
And well their weapons both can wield ;
One takes the broadsword and the shield,
 And lays about him ;
The deadly spear the other wields,
 And tries to rout him.

Each is the leader of a band,
Ready to do their chief's command,
And for his cause they'll boldly stand,
 Be 't right or wrong ;
“Our people's rights and native land,”
 Is their old song.

One champion in the end must fall,
The weakest soon goes to the wall ;
Then their war trumpet's clam'rous call
 Sounds through the nation,
All to revenge their champion's fall,
 From his high station.

Men fight another warfare still—
Instead of blood, 'tis ink they spill,
And with the pen they try to kill
 Their deadly foe ;
Till of revenge they drink their fill,
 And lay him low.



TO MY AULD PIKE STAFF.

My auld pike staff, my trusty frien',
Like hand and glove we aye hae been ;
Mony a change we baith hae seen,
Since first we met ;
Atween us yet nae words hae been,
I'm prood to say 't.

Well do I mind the April morn
I took you frae your parent thorn.
Although at times you 've been the scorn
O' modern pride,
I ne'er could bide to hae you shorn
O' bark or hide.

A varnished coat ye ne'er could shaw,
Like sticks that come frae far awa ;
Nor were you ever busket braw
Wi' dangling tassel ;
But aye a sturdy shank could shaw,
To bide a brassel.

When I to kirk or market gaed,
You aye did help me in my need ;
I didna want a hicc'ry reed
 Like strutting spark ;
They look nae better than a weed,
 And dae nae wark.

Ower hills and glens I've wandered wide
With you aye faithful by my side ;
Down craigs and rocks you've been my guide,
 And kept me right ;
With you I ne'er felt dashed nor fleyed
 In darkest night.

On many a wild-goose chase we've been,
When I was thoughtless, young, and green ;
Full forty miles we've often gane
 On summer's day,
When some famed spot was to be seen,
 Where heroes lay.

But now auld age is come at last,
And all those thoughtless days are past,
And oh, alas ! they vanished fast,
 Like some sweet dream ;
For them I'll raise nae mournful blast,
 Nae poet's theme.

We count our years now by the score,
Our furthest journey 's round the door ;
New scenes we 'll ne'er again explore,
 'Mid Nature's charms ;
But thought of what we 've seen before
 My old heart warms.

They thoughtless folks may sneer and laugh
At you and me, my auld pike staff ;
We 'll little heed their idle chaff,
 But toddle on ;
You 'll be my friend, my auld pike staff,
 Till I am gone.

AN ODE WRITTEN ON THE CENTENARY
OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

SCOTLAND resigns this day to Scott,
And hails this morn—
The day she never shall forget,
When he was born.
He, like some glorious comet bright,
Has crossed our sky ;
His radiance dimmed the stars of night
That round him lie.

His glory is no meteor-light,
But, like the sun,
He 'll shine with undiminished rays
Till time is done,
Till ocean old shall cease to roll
And rivers flow ;
Till then our Wizard's name shall live
With men below.

No higher fame can mortals know,
Where life is death,
And human glory here below
Is but a breath ;
But there 's a soul that lives in man
Knows no decay :
It has a voice when he is gone,
And passed away.

Scott, like some prophet-seer of old,
Whose soul had been
To that ethereal spirit-world
Unseen by men,
Had early learned that mystic art,
To cast a spell
Of glamour o'er the human heart,
That men love well.

For at his word men live again,
And feast our eyes :
He waves his pen, and angel forms
Drop from the skies :
We see them walk this earth again,
And hear them speak ;
Entranced we gaze with beating heart
And glowing cheek.

108 ODE ON THE CENTENARY OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

And o'er the mighty dead of old
 He cast his spell,
And made them to our list'ning ears
 Their story tell,
Of ancient feud and bloody strife,
 Of hate and love,
And all the varied passions deep,
 That hearts can move.

POOR DOEY IS DEAD : A LAMENT.

Poor Doeys dead, and rests her head
Beneath a moss-grown tree ;
We placed her there with tears and care,—
I mean, my wife and me ;
We neither spoke, nor silence broke,
But in our hearts we said,
“Our old friend’s gone, and we’re alone,
Our poor dog’s lowly laid.”

She was ill bred, the dog-folk said ;
But her heart was kind, I know.
If her tail was thick, and like a stick,
She had only part to show.
In circles round I’ve seen her bound
For half a summer’s day,
And try by might, by wrong and right,
The stump to tear away.

She’ll lie no more beside the door,
To watch when I come home,

And say, as plain as dog could say,
“Let’s down the green lane roam.”
Poor Doeys laid, as I have said,
Beneath a spreading tree ;
No more she’ll run, when day is done,
Along the lanes with me.

AN EPISTLE TO MR J. THOMSON.

AND so, my friend, you mean to taste
An author's toil and care,
Hoping that smiling Fame may have
A laurel leaf to spare,
A fresh green leaf without a stain,
To show you have not sung in vain.

I wish you in the task success
Which you have undertaken,
And trust that by no cross unseen,
Your purpose may be shaken ;
For difficulties oft arise,
When we seem nearest to the prize.

The lyre the master-minstrel sweeps,
With bowèd heads men pause to hear ;
And though its thrilling music clothe
A worthless theme, he needs not fear :
The distant zenith holds his star,
Its rays to beauty turn each scar.

'But when some nameless minstrel strikes
His trembling lyre with blush and stammer,
His measure, rhythm, rhyme are scanned,
And woe betide his hapless grammar.
What wonder if he shrink and shiver,
And turn his back on fame for ever !

More to the poet's heart than fame,
As life and freedom dear,
Is nature, quiet or wildly grand,
Howe'er she may appear.
To him the stream, the daisied sod,
Have each a voice which speaks of God.

When sorrow o'er his chequered path
Its sombre mantle flings,
Should foes triumph, or friends forsake,
Amid the clouds he sings :
His grandest or his sweetest strain
Is born of wrong or wrung by pain.

Not from the gory battle-field
Does inspiration come,
Not from the flashing steel, nor speaks
It in the rolling drum.
The poet gazes on afar,
And sees but Glory's gilded car.

Glory !—alas ! that e'er its praise
The poet should have sung,
That e'er earth's hills and dales should have
With martial music rung,
The voice of human love to smother,
And urge men to destroy each other !

Be 't ours to hail a better day,
When Glory's dazzling glare
Shall blind no more, nor blight the earth
With ruin and despair.
Be 't ours to sing of peace and love,
Which, blessing earth, is crowned above.

The world is wide, and sunlight free,
And free the balmy air ;
Some close their hearts 'gainst warmth and light,
Some catch a double share ;
And while for all the sun is shining,
The half are 'mid the clouds repining.

If on thy heart a double share
Of warmth and radiance streams,
Give back to those who see them not
Some pure life-giving beams,
Mellowed and softened by the touch
Of love, which bears and pardons much.

There may be hearts thy song will reach,
And rouse to courage, soothe to peace ;
It may touch chords whose echoing tones
Not ev'n with life itself shall cease.
Then why should'st thou in secret sing,
Though no proud wreath thy song may bring ?

There's blood upon the conqueror's bays,
Tears dim the patriot's crown ;
Thorns bristle on the envied wreath
The poet calls his own ;
And some perchance that wreath have worn
Who'd bruise the leaf to break the thorn.

Then forward with thy work, nor shrink
From critic's blame or praise.
If here and there a heart may be
Made better by thy lays,
Remember that is more than fame,
Than warrior's wreath or victor's name.

And now, farewell. I ne'er before
In rhyme a letter wrote,
And much I fear 'tis little worth ;
But whether prized or not,
Your success will give joy to me,
And I remain, your friend, E. D.

AN ANSWER TO E. D.'S EPISTLE.

THANKS, Madam, for your letter kind,
It helped to soothe an anxious mind.
You, that have felt "an author's care,"
Know well the thought that's upmost there.
There Hope and Fear alternate reign,
I fight against them but in vain.
Fear says, " Beware, and hold your hand
Before you self-committed stand
A fool before 'the gods and men,'
Convicted by your own goose-pen."
Then Hope breathes whisper in my ear,
"Take heart of grace, and never fear ;
If laurel wreath is not for thee,
Your head with daisies crowned shall be.
Though Fame for you no trumpet blow,
Love's oil upon your head shall flow."
And what is Fame compared to Love ?
It is the theme of saints above.
Fame, Hope, and Fear, as all men know,
Beyond the grave can never go.

The Man of Sorrows came to show
The power of Love on earth below ;
And when Love guides the poet's pen,
He 's like an angel sent to men.
Who would not wish, in his last hour,
To leave behind a spirit-dower,
A voice to soothe the tempest-driven,
Like that the prophet heard from heaven ?
This still small voice is calling still,
The same that spoke on Sinai's hill.
We hear it in the murmur'ring breeze,
That stirs at eve the leafy trees ;
We hear it in the rippling rill,
That dances down the ferny hill ;
We hear it in the rustling corn,
When by the reapers it is shorn.
All Nature speaks in accents clear,
But man is deaf and will not hear ;
By passion some are heedless driven,
They laugh at hell and jest at heaven ;
They think them both a pious fraud,
To please the good and fright the bad.
If men's *belief* be false or true,
In this free land we've nought to do ;
So long as they obey man's laws,
The state against them has no *cause*.

But there's a higher law of Love,
Vouchsafed to man from God above :
This law takes knowledge of the heart,
And bids us from all ill depart ;
To others we must act and do
Like friends and brothers stanch and true ;
Ourselves we must no longer please,
But cast behind us selfish ease.
Thus we must do if we desire
To hear that voice, "Friend, come up higher."
My friend ! we see but dimly here,
Our eyes cannot see heaven clear,
But, like a "vision of the night,"
It seems to pass before our sight ;
Like Job, in some lone midnight hour,
We tremble 'neath an unseen Power,
Then know we that there is on high,
A God with an all-seeing eye !

THE END.

TOMES
Malum

Mr Dr
Millett



